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## **AFRL breaks ground for new research facility**

*by Sue Baker, ASC Public Affairs*

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AFB, Ohio – Designing and testing experimental concepts for future aerospace systems will soon be easier now that Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) officials have broken ground for a Consolidated Aerospace Structures Research Laboratory (CASRL).

A \$19.3 million, military construction project at Wright-Patterson AFB, the CASRL will add approximately 36,000 square feet of new research space to the directorate's existing structural lab, Building 65, now used for mechanical and thermal load-testing of aerospace structures, according to Ken Leger, structures division program manager.

"The CASRL will give AFRL researchers in the structures division an integrated organization and laboratory capable of simulating combined flight loads in varied acoustic, vibrating and thermal environments," Leger said. "Such capabilities are required to verify advanced, structural design concepts, as well as benchmark analytical and simulation tools to support development of extreme environment technologies."

CASRL will enable integration of design, analysis and validation functions used before, during and after development of future military aerospace vehicles with AFRL researchers focusing primarily on high speed and access to space technologies, Leger said.

"It will consolidate widely-separated, smaller labs and engineering work stations, and combine mechanical loads, temperature, acoustic and vibration facilities, as well as reduce the cost of AFRL's infrastructure," he said. "By developing a combined, extreme environment, experimental validation capability, CASRL will facilitate the lab's 'joint vision' of design, analysis and verification."

Funded by Congress, CASRL is an Army Corps of Engineers project with prime contractor Butt Construction Co., of Dayton, Ohio. The project is scheduled for completion by December 2002. @